



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Summer is upon us, and with soaring gas prices and travelers staying closer to home this season, AOT is turning attention to our own back yard. In collaboration with [Arizona State Parks](#) and [Arizona Trail Association](#), AOT is launching a new in-state campaign to highlight the amazing discoveries, signature beauty and vibrant outdoor adventures that are all “Just Feet Away.”

[Arizona Passages](#) is an integrated campaign that energizes our brand promise by creating unique southwest moments for our in-state residents. It addresses potential budget concerns for summer travel by encouraging new discoveries and adventure that are easily accessible. It features outdoor adventures throughout the state, but also encompasses the experiences that highlight the rural charm and beauty of our cities and towns outside of the major metropolitan areas.

The call to Arizona residents to plan their adventure will be in print, radio, online, mall advertising, billboards and much more that direct consumers to www.AZPassages.com. This dynamic Web site is a true blend of AOT’s commitment to cutting-edge technology by providing itineraries, downloadable maps, meet-up groups, expert and peer recommendations, as well as information on all State Parks, and the Arizona Trail to give travelers the tools they need to explore Arizona.

To learn more about Arizona Passages, please visit www.AZPassages.com.

Where will your summer adventure take you?

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Sponsorship Opportunities for Travel Classics West – October 2008

The Arizona Office of Tourism and the Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau will host the fourth annual Travel Classics West conference at The Boulders Resort & Golden Door Spa October 23-26.

This conference combines the nation's top editors and pre-screened professional freelance writers for presentations, workshops and one-one-one consultation meetings.

Some of the editors confirmed for this year's conference include: *Diversions*; *Gourmet*; *Plenty*; *Endless Vacation*; *Culture + Travel*; ForbesTraveler.com; and Travel + Leisure Online.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Contact Maren Rudolph at 914-591-4503 for more information. For more information on the conference, visit

<http://www.travelclassics.com/conferences/2008/west/index.shtml>.

AOT Plans for 2009 Professional Travel Planner's Guide Publication

The Arizona Office of Tourism's Travel Industry Marketing division is publishing the 2009 *Professional Travel Planner's Guide*. PTPG is the official fulfillment publication for the division. This comprehensive statewide guide assists tour operators and travel agents in the U.S. and in key international countries as they create group and individual tour packages throughout Arizona.

With an annual circulation of 25,000, PTPG is distributed by AOT's international offices (Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, and Mexico) at domestic and international trade shows, and at national promotional events. It is also direct-mailed to clients in AOT's database, as well as in response to client inquiries. Additionally, PTPG will be available for instant download on AOT's Web site.

PTPG includes extensive itineraries, maps, events, motorcoach, and tour information designed to identify operators' needs and educate them on the range and diversity of destinations, attractions and facilities in Arizona. The publication also includes Resource Guides with Directory Listings for the following categories.

- Accommodations
- Activities & Recreation
- Attractions & Shopping
- Restaurants
- Receptive Services & DMCs
- Transportation

For additional information and to obtain a media kit, contact Kathleen Lockhart of Hennen Publishing and Marketing Group at kathleen@hennenpmg.com or at 480-664-0541.

Arizona Tourism University Materials Now Available On-Line

The informative materials presented at this year's Arizona Tourism University Workshops are now available for download on AOT's business-to-business Web site, www.azot.gov. Everything from workshop presentations to the educational toolkits can be accessed at <http://www.azot.gov/section.aspx?sid=4>.

Thank you to everyone who attended these workshops. This past year, nearly 400 people attended these instructive ATU sessions. We enjoyed seeing familiar faces and making new tourism friends. We look forward to another amazing series of workshops beginning this fall!

Industry News

DHS Announces Pre-Travel Authorization Program for U.S.-Bound Travelers from VISA Waiver Countries

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced the Interim Final Rule for the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), a new online system that is part of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and is required by the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007.

Once ESTA is mandatory, all nationals or citizens of VWP countries who plan to travel to the United States for temporary business or pleasure under the VWP will need to receive an electronic travel authorization prior to boarding a U.S.-bound airplane or cruise ship. The requirement will go into effect next year and does not affect U.S. citizens traveling overseas.

Currently, citizens of VWP countries complete a written I-94W form providing basic biographical, travel, and eligibility information while en-route to the U.S. With ESTA, VWP travelers will provide this information online prior to departure for the U.S.

ESTA will determine, almost immediately in many cases, if an individual is eligible for VWP travel, and if such travel poses any law enforcement or security risks. ESTA applications may be submitted at any time prior to travel, and once approved, will be valid for up to two years or until the applicant's passport expires, whichever comes first. Authorizations will also be valid for multiple entries into the U.S. To facilitate the authorization process, DHS recommends that ESTA applications be submitted as soon as an applicant begins planning U.S.-bound travel, and not less than 72 hours prior to travel.

On Aug. 1, 2008, the department will begin to accept voluntary applications through the ESTA Web site at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> <<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/>>. Until ESTA is mandatory for all VWP travelers, however, ESTA applicants will also still need to complete an I-94W form en-route, for presentation at a U.S. port of entry. The Secretary of Homeland Security is anticipated to publish a notice in the Federal Register by mid-November 2008, announcing implementation of mandatory ESTA requirements on Jan. 12, 2009.

Last fiscal year, the U.S. welcomed more than 15 million VWP visitors. For more information about ESTA, please visit www.cbp.gov/travel.

TIA Calls For Industry Summit on Air Travel Problems

The Travel Industry Association held a travel industry summit in Washington on June 17 to address the air travel crisis that a TIA survey says caused air travelers to avoid an estimated 41 million trips over the past 12 months at a cost of more than \$26 billion to the U.S. economy. Deep frustration with the air travel process is the main cause for the loss of business, TIA said, adding that travelers blame the air traffic control system and not the airlines. The emergency summit of travel leaders will discuss the next steps for moving the issue forward with policymakers. The study also found that air travelers express little optimism for positive change, with nearly 50 percent saying that the air travel system is not likely to improve in the near future. "The air travel crisis has hit a tipping point – more than 100,000 travelers each day are voting with their wallets by choosing to avoid trips," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of TIA. "This landmark research should be a wake up call to America's policy leaders that the time for meaningful air system reform is now." (*Wall Street Journal*; *USA Today*; *Travel Advance*, May 30)

International Visitation to U.S. up 15%

3.3 million International visitors traveled to the United States in February 2008, an increase of 15 percent over February 2007 as the U.S. Department of Commerce announced. Total visitation year-to-date 2008 was up 13 percent from the first two months of 2007. International visitors also spent \$11.6 billion during the month, up 26 percent from February 2007.

Some highlights, according to [TravelDailyNews](#):

- Canadian visitation grew 24 percent over February 2007 driven by air arrivals, up 19 percent and ground arrivals, up 29 percent. Year-to-date arrivals were up 18 percent.
- Arrivals from Mexico (traveling to interior U.S. points) were up 8 percent in February 2008. Air arrivals for the month were up 5 percent. Overall traffic for the year was up 9 percent with air arrivals up 7 percent.
- Overseas arrivals increased 11 percent in February and 10 percent year-to-date. Overseas markets have grown for 10 consecutive months.
- Visitation from Western Europe was up 17 percent in February 2008 and 14 percent year-to-date accounting for 43 percent of all overseas arrivals. Eastern European arrivals, up 17 percent for the month and 16 percent for the year, continued double-digit growth from October 2007. Russian visitation increased 20 percent for the month.
- Arrivals from the United Kingdom were up 11 percent in February and 9 percent year-to-date. Visitors from the U.K. accounted for 40 percent of all Western European arrivals.

Airlines Forecast to Lose \$6.1 Billion in '08

Airlines may report combined losses of \$6.1 billion this year, the worst since 2003, as spiraling fuel costs and slowing economies wipe out earnings. The International Air Transport Association, whose member airlines account for 93% of international air traffic, cut its forecast for the fourth time in nine months at a meeting in Istanbul yesterday after oil prices rose 42% in six months. Airlines had a profit of \$5.6 billion in 2007, the first since the 2001 terrorist attacks. More than a dozen carriers have collapsed in the past six months. (Pages D8, *Washington Post*; C4, *New York Times*; www.LosAngelesTimes.com/Business; www.ChicagoTribune.com/Business)

The airline industry is in full retreat against overpowering fuel prices--slashing flights, raising fares and slapping consumers with new fees for everything from checked bags to a packet of peanuts. All the airlines, that is, except Southwest Airlines. The low-fare carrier still allows passengers to check luggage, munch on snacks and sit where they like without doling out extra cash. And while it raised fares this year, the airline continues to set the lowest prices in the

industry on most routes. Southwest has a different strategy for dealing with the run-up in fuel prices. Rather than sharply raising fares across the board, the carrier is trying to attract more higher-paying business travelers. Instead of hitting customers with multiple new charges, Southwest is trying to draw more customers by marketing itself as the "no-fee airline." And while others are shrinking, Southwest is continuing to grow and take advantage of opportunities on routes vacated by competitors. (www.FortWorthStar-Telegram.com/Business)

Survey: U.S. Business Travelers Will Pay More for Green Lodging

U.S. business travelers are increasingly making daily choices to reduce their environmental impact, and they have specific expectations about the green practices hotels should be adopting today, according to a recent survey commissioned by Deloitte, reported by [Hotels](#). The survey shows business travelers have begun do some green practices routinely: Nearly seven of 10 business travelers (69 percent) say they always turn off the lights and one out of three (31percent) always adjusts the heat/air conditioner when leaving the room. Roughly a third of travelers surveyed are keenly concerned about green travel. Some 34 percent "seek out hotels that are environmentally friendly," just as 38 percent have researched green lodging facilities either online or by asking friends and relatives. Similarly, 28 percent say they would be willing to pay 10 percent more to stay in a green lodging facility. The survey polled a sample of 1,155 business travelers, defined as having taken at least one business trip in the past year that involved staying overnight at a lodging facility. The survey has a margin of error of +/- three percentage points. "Our survey shows that green concerns have made their way on to the business traveler's agenda," says Adam Weissenberg, Deloitte Tourism, Hospitality & Leisure leader. "Business travelers understand the issues and are trying to do their part in being more environmentally responsible when they are on the road." The top five environmental actions business travelers expect lodging facilities to be taking are (in order):

- Recycling (77 percent)
- Using energy-efficient lighting (74 percent)
- Using energy-efficient windows (59 percent)
- Placing cards in rooms to let guests request that sheets/towels not be changed (52 percent)
- Using environmentally safe cleaning products (49 percent)

Additionally, more than seven in 10 (71 percent) say they believe the lodging industry is only "somewhat" green, with an additional 23 percent saying the lodging industry is "not at all green." One in five (20 percent) say they have stayed at a hotel that didn't allow them to be as green as they wanted to be, while approximately 30 percent say they have requested sheets and/or towels not be changed, but the hotel changed them anyway.